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A Short Vindication OF THE *RELAPSE* AND THE Provok'd Wife, FROM Immorality and Prophaneneſs

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By the AUTHOR.

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A Short Vindication of the Relapſe *and the* Provok'd Wife, *from Immorality and Prophaneneſs.*

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WHEN firſt I ſaw Mr. *Collier's* Performance upon the Irregularities of the Stage (in which amongſt the reſt of the Gentlemen, he's pleas'd to afford me ſome particular Favours), I was far from deſigning to trouble either my ſelf or the Town with a Vindication; I thought his Charges againſt me for Immorality and Prophaneneſs were grounded upon ſo much Miſtake, that every one (who had had the curioſity to ſee the Plays, or on

this Occaſion ſhould take the trouble to read 'em) would eaſily diſcover the Root of the Invective, and that 'twas the Quarrel of his Gown, and not of his God, that made him take Arms againſt me.

I found the Opinion of my Friends and Acquaintance the ſame, (at leaſt they told me ſo) and the Righteous as well as the Unrighteous perſuaded me, The Attack was ſo weak, the Town wou'd defend it ſelf; That the General's Head was too hot for his Conduct to be wiſe; his Shot too much at Random ever to make a Breach; and that the Siege wou'd be raiſed, without my taking the Field.

I eaſily believ'd, what my Lazineſs made me wiſh; but I have ſince found, That by the Induſtry of ſome People, whoſe Temporal Intereſt engages 'em in the Squabble;

ble; and the Natural Propenſity of others, to be fond of any thing that's Abuſive; this Lampoon has got Credit enough in ſome Places to brand the Perſons it mentions with almoſt as bad a Character, as the Author of it has fixt upon himſelf, by his Life and Converſation in the World.

I think 'tis therefore now a thing no farther to be laught at. Should I wholly ſit ſtill, thoſe People who are ſo much miſtaken to think I have been buſy to encourage Immorality, may double their Miſtake, and fancy I profeſs it: I will therefore endeavour, in a very few Pages to convince the World, I have brought nothing upon the Stage, that proves me more an Atheiſt than a Bigot.

I may be blind in what relates to my ſelf; 'tis more than poſſible, for moſt People are ſo: But

if I judge right, what I have done is in general a Diſcouragement to Vice and Folly; I am ſure I intended it, and I hope I have performed it. Perhaps I have not gone the common Road, nor obſerved the ſtricteſt Preſcriptions: But I believe thoſe who know this Town, will agree, That the Rules of a College of Divines will in an Infinity of Caſes, fall as ſhort of the Diſorders of the Mind, as thoſe of the Phyſicians do in the Diſeaſes of the Body; and I think a man may vary from 'em both, without being a Quack in either.

The real Query is, Whether the Way I have varied, be likely to have a good Effect, or a bad one? That's the true State of the Caſe; which if I am caſt in, I don't queſtion however to gain at leaſt thus much of my Cauſe, That it ſhall be allow'd I aim'd at the

the Mark, whether I hit it or not. This, if it won't vindicate my Senſe, will juſtify my Morals; and ſhew the World, That this Honeſt Gentleman, in ſtretching his Malice, and curtailing his Charity, has play'd a Part which wou'd have much better become a Licentious Poet, than a Reverend Divine.

Tho' I reſolve to uſe very few Words, I would willingly obſerve ſome Method, were it poſſible; that the World, who is the Judge, might ſum up the Evidence the eaſier, and bring the Right and Wrong into the ſhorter (and by conſequence the clearer) View: But his Play is ſo wild, I muſt be content to take the Ball as it comes, and return it if I can; which whether I always do or not, however, I believe will prove no great matter, ſince I hope 'twill appear,

where

where he gives me the Reſt, he makes but a wide Chace: His moſt threatning Strokes end in nothing at all; when he Cuts, he's under Line; when he Forces, he's up in the Nets. But to leave Tennis, and come to the Matter.

The Firſt Chapter in his Book is upon the Immodeſty of the Stage; where he tells you how valuable a Qualification Modeſty is in a Woman: For my part I am wholly of his mind; I think 'tis almoſt as valuable in a Woman as in a Clergyman; and had I the ruling of the Roaſt, the one ſhou'd neither have a Husband, nor the t'other a Benefice without it. If this Declaration won't ſerve to ſhew I'm a Friend to't, let us ſee what Proof this Gentleman can give of the contrary.

I don't

I don't find him over-ſtock'd with Quotations in this Chapter: He's forc'd, rather than ſay nothing, to fall upon poor Miſs *Hoyden*. He does not come to Particulars, but only mentions her with others, for an immodeſt Character. What kind of Immodeſty he means, I can't tell: But I ſuppoſe he means Lewdneſs, becauſe he generally means wrong. For my part, I know of no Bawdy ſhe talks: If the Strength of his Imagination gives any of her Diſcourſe that Turn, I ſuppoſe it may be owing to the Number of Bawdy Plays he has read, which have debauch'd his Taſte, and made every thing ſeem Salt, that comes in his way. P. 10.

He has but one Quotation more in this long Chapter, that I am concern'd in: And there he points at the *Provok'd Wife*, as if there P. 35.

were

were ſomething in the 41ſt Page of that Play, to diſcountenance Modeſty in Women. But ſince he did not think fit to acquaint the Reader what it was, I will.

Lady *Brute* and *Bellinda* ſpeaking of the Smuttineſs of ſome Plays, *Bellinda* ſays,

Why don't ſome Reformer or other beat the Poet for it?

L. B. *Becauſe he is not ſo ſure of our Private Approbation, as of our Publick Thanks: Well, ſure there is not upon Earth ſo impertinent a Thing as Womens Modeſty.*

B. *Yes, Mens Fantaſque, that obliges us to it: If we quit our Modeſty, they ſay we loſe our Charms; and yet they know That very Modeſty is Affectation, and rail at our Hypocriſy.*

Now

Now which way this Gentleman will extract any thing from hence, to the Diſcouragement of Modeſty, is beyond my Chymiſtry: 'Tis plainly and directly the contrary. Here are two Women (not over Virtuous, as their whole Character ſhews), who being alone, and upon the rallying Pin, let fall a Word between Jeſt and Earneſt, as if now and then they found themſelves cramp'd by their Modeſty. But leſt this ſhou'd poſſibly be miſtaken by ſome part of the Audience, leſs apprehenſive of Right and Wrong than the reſt, they are put in mind at the ſame Inſtant, That (with the Men) if they quit their Modeſty, they loſe their Charms: Now I thought 'twas impoſſible to put the Ladies in mind of any thing more likely to make 'em preſerve it. I have nothing more

laid

laid to my Charge in the Firſt Chapter.

The Second is entituled, *The Prophaneneſs of the Stage*; which he ranges under Two Heads.

Their Curſing and Swearing. And *Their Abuſe of Religion and the Holy Scriptures.*

As to *Swearing*, I agree with him in what he ſays of it in general, That 'tis contrary both to Religion and Good Manners, eſpecially before Women: But I ſay, what he calls *Swearing* in the Play-houſe, (at leaſt where I have to anſwer for it) is a Breach upon neither.

And here I muſt deſire the Reader to obſerve, His Accuſations againſt me run almoſt always in general Terms, he ſcarce ever comes

comes to Particulars: I hope 'twill be allow'd a good ſign on my ſide, that it always falls to my turn to quote the thing at length in my Defence, which he huddles together in my Charge. What follows will be an Inſtance of it.

He ſays in the 57th Page, (where the Buſineſs of Swearing is upon the *Tapis*) with a great deal of Honeſty and Charity, That in this reſpect the *Relapſe* and the *Provok'd Wife* are particularly rampant and ſcandalous.

Wou'd not any body imagine from hence, that the Oaths that were uſed there, were no leſs than thoſe of a Loſing Bully at *Baggammon*, or a Bilk'd Hackney-Coachman? Yet after all, the ſtretch of the Prophaneneſs lies in Lord *Foppington's Gad*, and Miſs *Hoyden's I-Cod*. This is all this Gentleman's Zeal is in ſuch a Ferment about. Now

Now whether ſuch Words are entirely juſtifiable or not, there's this at leaſt to be ſaid for 'em; That People of the Niceſt Rank both in their Religion and their Manners throughout *Chriſtendom* uſe 'em.

In *France* you meet with *Par Die*, *Par Bleu*, *Ma Foy*, *&c.* in the conſtant Converſation of the Ladies and the Clergy, I mean thoſe who are Religious even up to Bigotry it ſelf; and accordingly we ſee they are always allow'd in their Plays: And in *England*, we meet with an Infinity of People, Clergy as well as Laity, and of the beſt Lives and Converſations, who uſe the Words *I-gad*, *I-faith*, *Codsfiſh*, *Cot's my Life*, and many more, which all lye liable to the ſame Objection.

Now whether they are right or wrong in doing it, I think at leaſt their

their Example is Authority enough for the Stage; and ſhou'd have been enough to have kept ſo good a Chriſtian as Mr. *Collier* from loading his Neighbour with ſo foul a Charge as Blaſphemy and Prophaneneſs, unleſs he had been better provided to make it good.

The next thing he takes to task in this Chapter, is the Abuſe of Religion and Holy Scripture. Now here I think he ſhou'd firſt clearly have prov'd, That no Story, Phraſe, or Expreſſion whatſoever in the Scripture, whether in the Divine, Moral, or Hiſtorical part of it, ſhou'd be either repeated, or ſo much as alluded to, upon the Stage, to how uſeful an End ſoever it might be applied: This I ſay he ſhou'd have firſt put paſt a diſpute, before he fell upon me for an Abuſer of the Holy Scri-

pture; for unleſs that be to abuſe it, I am innocent.

The Scripture is made up of Hiſtory, Prophecy, and Precept; which are things in their Nature capable of no other Burleſque than what calls in queſtion either their Reality or their Senſe: Now if any Alluſion I have made, be found even to glance at either of them, I ſhall be ready to ask Pardon both of God and the Church. But to the Trial.

The firſt Accuſation lies upon
P. 77. the *Provok'd Wife*, where *Raſor* is highly blam'd by Mr. *Collier*; for, in the 77th Page, pleading the ſame Excuſe to an untoward Prank he had newly play'd, which *Adam* did heretofore upon a more unfortunate Occaſion: *That Woman having tempted him, the Devil overcame him.* How the Scripture is affronted by this, I can't tell; here's

here's nothing that reflects upon the Truth of the Story: It may indeed put the Audience in mind of their Forefather's Crime, and his Folly, which in my Opinion, like *Gunpowder-Treason*, ought never to be forgot.

The Line in *Rasor's* Confession, which Mr. *Collier's* Modesty ties him from repeating, makes the Close of this Sentence: *And if my Prayers were to be heard, her punishment for so doing shou'd be like the Serpent's of old, she shou'd lye upon her face all the days of her life.* Pro. W. P. 78.

All I shall say to this, is, That an Obscene Thought must be buried deep indeed, if he don't smell it out; and that I find he has a much greater Veneration for the Serpent than I have, who shall always make a very great distinction between my Respects to God and the Devil.

He runs a Muck at all. The
P. 78. next he launces at is my Lord *Foppington*. And here he's as angry at me for being *for* Religion, as before for being *againſt* it, (which ſhews you the Man's reſolv'd to quarrel with me) : For I think his Lordſhip's Words which he quotes about St. *James*'s Church, are beyond all diſpute on the Miniſter's ſide, though not on his Congregation's: The Indecencies of the Place, the Levity of the Women, and the unſeaſonable Gallantry of
Relapſe, the Men, are expos'd in the very
P. 23, 33. Lines this Gentleman is pleas'd to quote for their Prophaneneſs. For though my Lord *Foppington* is not ſuppos'd to ſpeak what he does to a Religious End, yet 'tis ſo ordered, that his manner of ſpeaking it, together with the Character he repreſents, plainly and obviouſly inſtructs the Audience

(even

(even to the meaneſt Capacity) that what he ſays of his Church-Behaviour, is deſign'd for their Contempt, and not for their Imitation: This is ſo notorious, that no School-boy cou'd miſtake it: I therefore hope thoſe who obſerve this Man of Reformation is capable of giving ſo good an Intention ſo pernicious a Turn, will conclude, when he ſat down to write upon the Prophaneneſs of the Poets, he had nothing leſs in his Head, than to refine the Morals of the Age.

From the Elder Brother he falls upon the Younger; I ſuppoſe, becauſe he takes me to be his Friend, for I find no other reaſon for his Quarrel: He accuſes him for aſſuring his Man *Lory*, that he has kick'd his Conſcience down Stairs; and he obſerves, he ſays, by the way, that this Looſe Young Gen-

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tleman is the Author's Favourite. Now the Author obſerves by the way, That he's always obſerving wrong; for he has no other proof of his being his Favourite, than that he has help'd him to a Wife, who's likely to make his Heart ake: But I ſuppoſe Mr. *Collier* is of Opinion, that Gold can never be bought too dear.

Relapſe, P. 51. The next Flirt is at *Worthy* and *Berinthia*; and here he tells you Two Characters of Figure determine the Point in Defence of Pimping. I can pardon his Miſtake in the buſineſs of Pimping, becauſe I charitably believe the Univerſity may have been the only Place he has had any Experience of it in, and there 'tis not managed indeed by People of any extraordinary Figure: But he may be inform'd if he pleaſes, that in this Righteous Town the Profeſ-

ſion

ſion ſoars ſomewhat higher, and that (out of my Lord-Mayor's Liberties) there are ſuch things as *Worthy* and *Berinthia* to be found. I brought 'em upon the Stage to ſhew the World how much the Trade was improv'd; but this Gentleman I find won't take my Word for't.

Nurſe is to have the next Kick o' the Breech, and 'tis for being too Prophane. But that's left for me to quote again: For his part, all he repeats from her is, *That his Worſhip (young Faſhion) overflows with his Mercy and his Bounty: He is not only pleas'd to forgive us our Sins, but which is more than all, has prevail'd with me to become the Wife of thy Boſom.* Relapſe, p. 96.

This he ſays is dull: Why ſo 'tis; and ſo is he, for thinking it worth his finding fault with, unleſs it had been ſpoke by ſome-

body elſe than a Nurſe, and to ſome-body elſe than Mr. *Bull.* But the Prophane Stuff he ſays precedes it, I'll acquaint the Reader with. She ſays (ſpeaking to the Chaplain) Roger, *Are not you a wicked man*, Roger, *to ſet your ſtrength againſt a weak Woman, and perſuade her it was no Sin to conceal Miſs's Nuptials? My Conſcience flies in my face for it, thou Prieſt of* Baal; *and I find by woful Experience, thy Abſolution is not worth an old Caſſock.*

The Reader may here be pleas'd to take notice what this Gentleman would conſter Prophaneneſs, if he were once in the Saddle with a good Pair of Spurs upon his Heels. I have all manner of Reſpect for the Clergy, but I ſhou'd be very ſorry to ſee the Day, that a Nurſe's cracking a Jeſt upon a Chaplain (where it has no Alluſion to Religion) ſhou'd be

brought

brought within the Verge of Prophaneneſs: But the next Chapter, about the Abuſe of the Clergy, will give occaſion for ſome more Remarks of this kind.

Amanda comes next, I thought ſhe might have ſcap'd, but it ſeems with all her Vertue, ſhe charges the Bible with Untruths, and ſays,

Good Gods, what ſlippery ſtuff are men compos'd of! ſure the Account of their Creation's falſe, and 'twas the Woman's Rib that they were form'd of.

I'm ſorry the Gentleman who writ this Speech of *Amanda*'s, is not here to defend himſelf; but he being gone away with the *Czar*, who has made him Poet Laureat of *Muſcovy*, I can do no leſs for the Favour he intended me, than to ſay this in his Juſtification. That to my knowledge he has too much

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Veneration for the Bible, to intend this a charge upon the Truth of it; and that it appears very plain to me, *Amanda* intended no more to call it in queſtion by thoſe words, than Mr. *Collier*'s Wife might be ſuppos'd to do, if from ſome Obſervations upon his Book, ſhe ſhou'd ſay, *Sure 'tis a miſtake in the New Teſtament, that the fruits of the Spirit are, Modeſty, Temperance, Juſtice, Meekneſs, Charity,* &c. *for my* Jeremy *is a ſpiritual Perſon, yet has not One of theſe marks about him.*

P. 80. *Worthy* follows: And I am threatned with no leſs than Eternal Damnation, for making him ſay to his Procureſs (when ſhe had promis'd to do what he'd have her) *Thou Angel of Light, let me fall down and adore thee.* But I am not commended for the Anſwer ſhe makes him, to put the Audi-

ence

ence in mind, ſhe was not ſuppos'd to deſerve that Compliment, *Thou Miniſter of Darkneſs get up again, for I hate to ſee the Devil at his Devotions.* If Mr. *Collier* had quoted this too, he had given a better Character of me, and I think of himſelf. Relapſe, p. 91.

A Page or two farther, he has a ſnap, as he goes by, at the *Provok'd Wife.* And here he's at foul play again. He accuſes Lady *Brute* for ſetting down as a Precept, that the Part of a Wife, is to Cuckold her Husband; whereas her words are theſe, *In ſhort,* Bellinda, *he has us'd me ſo barbarouſly of late, I cou'd almoſt reſolve to play the downright Wife, and Cuckold him.* Prov. Wife, p. 3.

This indeed is ſaying, Wives do Cuckold their Husbands (I ask the Ladies Pardons for Lying): But 'tis not ſaying they ſhou'd do ſo:

ſo: I hope Mr. *Collier* will ask mine.

Lady *Brute* in her next Reply to *Bellinda*, ſays, what I own at firſt view ſeems much more liable to exception. Yet leaſt the Audience ſhou'd miſtake her Raillery for her ſerious Opinion, there is care taken immediately to inform 'em otherwiſe by making her reprimand her ſelf in theſe words to *Bellinda*. *But I ſhall play the fool and jeſt on, till I make you begin to think I am in earneſt.*

Here, methinks, he ſhou'd have commended me for my Caution. But he was ſurly, and wou'd not.

Young Faſhion is next accus'd for ſaying to *Lory* (when he had a proſpect of getting Miſs *Hoyden*) *Providence, thou ſeeſt at laſt, takes care of men of Merit.*

This

This ſurely is a very poor Charge, and a Critick muſt be reduc'd to ſhort Commons to chop at it. Every body knows the word Providence in Common Diſcourſe goes for Fortune. If it be anſwer'd, Let it go for what it will, it is in ſtrictneſs God Almighty; I anſwer again, That if you go to ſtrictneſs, Fortune is God Almighty as much as Providence, and yet no One ever thought it Blaſphemy to ſay, Fortune's blind, or Fortune favours Fools: And the reaſon why it is not thought ſo, is becauſe 'tis known it is not meant ſo.

Berinthia comes again, and is blam'd for telling *Amanda*, *Worthy* had taken her to pieces like a Text, and preach'd upon every part of her; This is call'd a Lewd and Prophane Allegory. I confeſs it has at a glance, the appear-

ance

ance of ſomewhat which it is not, and that methinks Mr. *Collier* might have been content to have charg'd it with; but he always takes care to ſtretch that way that becomes him leaſt, and ſo is ſure to be in the wrong himſelf, whether I am ſo or not.

Neither the Woman in general, nor any particular part about her, is liken'd to the Text; The Simile lies between the Manner of a Miniſter's uſing his Text, and *Worthy*'s Flouriſhing upon his Miſtreſs; So that the Prophanation's got in the wrong place here again. But ſuppoſing the Miniſter to be as Mr. *Collier* wou'd have him, as ſacred a thing as his Text, there's nothing here that Burleſques him; 'Tis a Simile indeed, but a very inoffenſive one, for it abuſes nobody; and as to the Lewdneſs on't, I refer my ſelf to the Reader

here

here again, whether this Gentleman does not give us another Inſtance of his having a very quick Noſe, when ſome certain things are in the Wind. I believe, had the Obſcenity he has routed up here, been buried as deep in his Church-yard, the Yareſt Boar in his Pariſh wou'd hardly have toſt up his Snout at it.

Berinthia's Cloſe of her Speech, *Now conſider of what has been ſaid, and Heaven give you grace to put it in practice*, brings up the Rear of the Attack in this Chapter. Theſe I own are words often us'd at the cloſe of a Sermon, and therefore perhaps might as well have been let alone here. A known Pulpit-Expreſſion ſounds looſe upon the Stage, though nothing is really affronted by it; for that I think in this Caſe is very plain, to any body that conſiders, who it is that

ſpeaks

ſpeaks theſe words, and her manner of doing it. There's nothing ſerious in't, as if ſhe wou'd perſwade either *Amanda* or the Audience that Heaven approv'd what ſhe was doing: 'Tis only a looſe Expreſſion, ſuitable to the Character ſhe repreſents, which, throughout the Play, ſufficiently ſhews, ſhe's brought upon the Stage to Ridicule ſomething that's off on't.

Theſe three or four laſt Quotations Mr. *Collier* ſays are downright Blaſphemy, and within the Law. I hope the Reader will perceive he ſays wrong.

The next Chapter is upon the Abuſe of the Clergy: And here we are come to the Spring of the Quarrel. I believe whoever reads Mr. *Collier*, need take very little pains to find out, that in all probability, had the Poets never diſcover'd

cover'd a Rent in the Gown, he had done by Religion, as I do by my Brethren, left it to ſhift for it ſelf.

In ſtarting this Point, he opens a large Field for an Adverſary to Rove in, he unbars the Gate of the Town, forgetting the Weakneſs of the Garriſon; were I the Governor on't, I'd commend him for his Courage, much more than for his Prudence.

I once thought to have ſaid a great deal upon this Occaſion; But I have chang'd my mind, and will trouble the Reader with no more than I think is neceſſary to clear my ſelf from the Charge of Ridiculing the Function of a Clergyman.

I am as fully convinc'd, as the moſt Pious Divine, or the moſt Refin'd Politician can wiſh me, how neceſſary the Practice of all

Moral Vertues is to our Happineſs in this World, as well as to that of another. And this Opinion has its natural Conſequence with me, which is, to give me a regard to every Inſtrument of their Promotion.

The Inſtitution of the Clergy, I own to be both in the Intention and Capacity the moſt effectual of all; I have therefore for the Function all imaginable Deference, and wou'd do all things to ſupport it in ſuch a kind of Credit, as will render it moſt formidable in the execution of its Deſign. But in this Mr. *Collier* and I, I doubt, are not like to agree.

He is of Opinion, That Riches and Plenty, Title, State and Dominion, give a Majeſty to Precept, and cry *Place* for it where-ever it comes; That Chriſt and his Apoſtles took the thing by the

wrong

wrong Handle; and that the Pope and his Cardinals have much refin'd upon 'em in the Policy of Inſtruction. That ſhou'd a Vicar, like St. *John*, feed on Locuſts and Wild Honey, his Pariſh wou'd think he had too ill a taſte for himſelf, to cater for them; and that a Biſhop, who, like St. *Paul*, ſhou'd decline Temporal Dominion, wou'd ſhew himſelf ſuch an Aſs, his Advice wou'd go for nothing.

This I find is Mr. *Collier*'s Opinion; and if ever I take Orders, I won't ſwear it ſhan't be mine: But then I fear I ſhall continue in my Hereſy; Three Articles of which are theſe:

1. That the Shepherd, who has leaſt Buſineſs at home in his Houſe, is likely to take the moſt care of his Flock.

2. That he who finds fault with the Sauce he greedily ſops his bread in, gives very good cauſe to ſuſpect he'd fain keep it all to himſelf.
3. That he who is ſtrict in the Performance of his Duty, needs no Other help, to be reſpected in his Office.

Theſe Pills, I own, are as bitter to the Fleſh, as they are agreeable to the Spirit; but the Phyſick's ſound, and the Preſcription is ſo neceſſary, that when nothing elſe will perſuade ſome people to ſwallow 'em, I think 'tis not amiſs, they ſhou'd be forc'd down by the Stage. If any Poet has gone farther, let him anſwer for't; I'll endeavour to ſhow I have not. And firſt I'm to anſwer for Sir *John Brute*'s putting on a Gown to Abuſe the Clergy.

If

If a Sir *John Brute* off the Stage ſhou'd put on a Gown in his Cups, and paſs his Lewdneſs upon the World, for the Extravegances of a Churchman; This, I own, wou'd be an Abuſe and a Prejudice to the Clergy. But to expoſe this very Man upon the Stage, for putting this Affront upon the Gown; to put the Audience in mind, that there were Laymen ſo wicked, they car'd not what they did to bring Religion in Contempt, and were therefore always ready to throw dirt upon the Pilots of it:

This I believe no body but a Man of Mr. *Collier*'s heat, could have miſtaken ſo much, to quote it under the head, of the Clergy abus'd by the Stage. But Men that ride Poſt, with the Reins looſe upon the Neck, muſt expect to get falls. When he writes again, he'll take

up perhaps, and mix a little Lead with his Quickſilver.

The Juſtice does indeed drop a word which alludes to the Jolly Doings of ſome Boon Companions in the Fenns; and if I had let him drop a word or two more, I think I had made him a better Juſtice than I have.

In the *Relapſe*, Mr. *Collier* complains that his Brother *Bull* wiſhes the married Couple Joy in Language ſo horribly ſmutty and Prophane, to tranſcribe it wou'd blot the Paper too much. I'm therefore put upon the old neceſſity to tranſcribe it for him, that the World may ſee what this honeſt Gentleman wou'd paſs upon them as well as me, for Prophane, had he as long a Sword in his Hand as the Pope has in his.

Bull's words are theſe. *I moſt humbly thank your Honours; and I hope, ſince it has been my Lot to join you in the Holy Bands of* Wedlock, *you will ſo cultivate the Soil, which I have crav'd a Bleſſing on, that your Children may ſwarm about you, like Bees about a Honey-comb.* Theſe are the words he calls horribly Smutty and Prophane. Relapſe, p. 74.

The next Quarrel's about I don't know what; nor can light of any body that can tell me. He ſays, *Young Faſhion*'s deſiring Mr. *Bull* to make haſte to Sir *Tunbelly*; He anſwers him very decently, *I fly my good Lord.* What this Gentleman means by this Quotation, I can't imagine; but I can anſwer for t'other Gentleman, he only meant he'd make haſte. Relapſe, p. 75.

He quotes Two or Three Sentences more of *Bull*'s, which are juſt as Prophane as the reſt: He

concludes, That the Chaplain has a great deal of heavy Stuff upon his hands; and his chief Quarrel to me here is, That I have not made him a Wit.

I ask pardon, that I cou'd ſuppoſe a Deputy-Lieutenant's Chaplain cou'd be a Blockhead; but I thought, if there was ſuch a thing, he was as likely to be met with in Sir *Tunbelly*'s Houſe, as any where. If ever I write the Character of a Gentleman where a Chaplain like Mr. *Collier* is to have the Direction of the Family, I'll endeavour to give him more Senſe, that I may qualify him for more Miſchief.

He has now left laſhing me in particular, and I only have my ſhare in his general Stroke upon all ſuch ſinful Wretches, who *attack Religion under every Form, and purſue the Prieſthood through all the Sub-*

P.

Subdiviſions of Opinion. He ſays, *Neither* Jews *nor Heathens*, Turks *nor Chriſtians*, Rome *nor* Geneva, *Church nor Conventicle, can eſcape us.* And we ſay, They'll all eſcape us, if he can defend 'em. Prieſt or Presbyter, Pope or *Calvin*, *Muſti* or *Brammen*, Ambaſſador from God, or Envoy from the Devil, if they have but their Credentials from t'other World, they are (with him) all Brothers of the Sacred String; there's no more Diſcord than is neceſſary to make up the Harmony; and if a Poet does but touch the worſt Inſtrument they play upon, the Holy Conſort of Religion and Morality, he'll tell you, is quite out of Tune.

Thus violently does his Zeal to the Prieſthood run away with him: Some Clergyman, methinks, ſhould help to ſtop him; and I almoſt

almoſt perſuade my ſelf there will: There is ſtill in the Gown of the Church of *England* a very great Number of Men, both Learned, Wiſe, and Good, who thoroughly underſtand Religion, and truly love it: From amongſt theſe I flatter my ſelf ſome Hero will ſtart up, and with the naked Virtue of an Old Generous *Roman*, appear a Patriot for Religion indeed; with a Trumpet before him proclaim the Secrets of the Cloyſter, and by diſcovering the Diſeaſe, guide the World to the Cure on't.

He may ſhew (if he pleaſes), That the Contempt of the Clergy proceeds from another kind of Want, than that of Power and Revenue: That Piety and Learning, Charity and Humility, with ſo viſible a Neglect of the Things of this Life, that no one can doubt

doubt their Expectations from another; is the way to be believ'd in their Doctrine, follow'd in their Precepts, and (by a moſt infallible Conſequence) reſpected in their Function. Religion is not a Cheat, and therefore has no need of Trappings: Its Beauty is in its Nature, and wants no Dreſs: An Ambaſſador who comes with Advantagious Propoſals, ſtands in no need of Equipage to procure him Reſpect. He who teaches Piety and Morality to the World, is ſo great a Benefactor to Mankind, he need never doubt their Thanks, if he does not ask too much of their Money. But here's the Sand, where Religion runs aground, Avarice and Ambition in its Teachers, are the Rocks on which 'tis daſh'd to pieces. It, with many weak people, brings the whole matter into doubt. Men

natu-

naturally ſuſpect the Foundation of a Project, where the Projector is eager for a larger Contribution than they ſee is neceſſary to carry on the Work. But this Caſe is ſo plain, there needs nothing to illuſtrate it. 'Tis the Clergy's Invaſion into the Temporal Dominion, that has rais'd the Alarm againſt 'em: It has made their Doctrine ſuſpected, and by conſequence, their Perſons deſpis'd. I own I have ſometimes doubted whether *Pharaoh* with all the Hardneſs of his Heart, wou'd have purſu'd the Children of *Iſrael* to the *Red Sea*, as he did, if they had not meddled with the Riches of his Subjects at their parting; but that Action renew'd the Doubts of a Faith ſo weak as his, and made him, in ſpight of all the Miracles he had ſeen, queſtion whether *Moſes* had his Commiſſion from God.

God. He paid indeed for his Infidelity, as others may happen to do upon a parallel Miſtake, I wiſh none have don't already: But I'm afraid thoſe very Inſtances Mr. *Collier* gives us of the Grandeur of the Clergy, are the things that have deſtroy'd both them and their Flocks.

They owe their Fall to their Ambition; their ſoaring ſo high has melted their Wings; in a word, had they never been ſo great, they had never been ſo little. But leſt I ſhou'd be miſtaken, and make my ſelf Enemies of Men I am no Enemy to, I muſt declare, my Thoughts are got to *Rome*, while I am talking thus of the Clergy; for the Charge is in no meaſure ſo heavy at home. The Reformation has reduc'd things to a tolerable Medium; and I believe what Quarrel we have

have to our Clergy here, points more at the Conduct of ſome, than the Eſtabliſhment of the whole. I wiſh it may never go farther, and I believe it won't, if thoſe who I don't queſtion are ſtill by much the Majority, will to ſo good an End (as the curbing their Ambitious Brethren, and reforming their Lewd ones) for once make a League with the Wicked, and agree, That whilſt They play their Great Artillery at 'em from the Pulpit, the Poets ſhall pelt 'em with their Small Shot from the Stage. But ſince Mr. *Collier* is violently bent againſt this, I'll tell him why I am for it. And 'tis,

Becauſe he has put me in mind, in the firſt Words of his Book, That the Buſineſs of Plays, *is to recommend Virtue and diſcountenance Vice: To ſhew the Uncertainty of Human*

Human Greatneſs; the ſudden Turns of Fate, and the unhappy Concluſions of Violence and Injuſtice: That 'tis to expoſe the Singularities of Pride and Fancy; to make Folly and Falſhood contemptible, and to bring every thing that is ill, under Infamy and Neglect.

The next Chapter is upon the Encouragement of Immorality by the Stage: And here *Conſtant* is fallen upon, for pretending to be a Fine Gentleman, without living up to the Exact Rules of Religion. If Mr. *Collier* excludes every one from that Character, that does not, I doubt he'll have a more general Quarrel to make up with the Gentlemen of *England*, than I have with the Lords, tho' he tells 'em I have highly affronted 'em.

But I wou'd fain know after all, upon what Foundation he lays ſo

poſitive

poſitive a Poſition, That *Conſtant* is my Model for a Fine Gentleman; and that he is brought upon the Stage for Imitation.

He might as well ſay, if I brought His Character upon the Stage, I deſign'd it a Model to the Clergy: And yet I believe moſt People wou'd take it t'other way. O, but theſe kind of Fine Gentlemen, he ſays, are always proſperous in their Undertakings, and their Vice under no kind of Detection; for in the Fifth Act of the Play, they are uſually rewarded with a Wife or a Miſtreſs. And ſuppoſe I ſhou'd reward him with a Biſhoprick in the Fifth Act, wou'd that mend his Character? I have too great a Veneration for the Clergy, to believe that wou'd make 'em follow his ſteps. And yet (with all due Reſpect to the Ladies) take one Amour with another,

another, the Biſhoprick may prove as weighty a Reward as a Wife or a Miſtreſs either. He ſays, Mr. *Bull* was abus'd upon the Stage, yet he got a Wife and a Benefice too. Poor *Conſtant* has neither, nay, he has not got even his Miſtreſs yet, he had not, at leaſt, when the Play was laſt Acted. But this honeſt Doctor, I find, does not yet underſtand the Nature of Comedy, tho' he has made it his Study ſo long. For the Buſineſs of Comedy is to ſhew People what they ſhou'd do, by repreſenting them upon the Stage, doing what they ſhou'd not. Nor is there any neceſſity a Philoſopher ſhou'd ſtand by, like an Interpreter at a Poppet-ſhow, to explain the Moral to the Audience: The Myſtery is ſeldom ſo deep, but the Pit and Boxes can dive into it; and 'tis their Example out of the

Play-houſe, that chiefly influences the Galleries. The Stage is a Glaſs for the World to view it ſelf in; People ought therefore to ſee themſelves as they are; if it makes their Faces too Fair, they won't know they are Dirty, and by conſequence will neglect to waſh 'em: If therefore I have ſhew'd *Conſtant* upon the Stage, what generally the Thing call'd a Fine Gentleman is off on't, I think I have done what I ſhou'd do. I have laid open his Vices as well as his Virtues: 'Tis the Buſineſs of the Audience to obſerve where his Flaws leſſen his Value; and by conſidering the Deformity of his Blemiſhes, become ſenſible how much a Finer Thing he wou'd be without 'em. But after all, *Conſtant* ſays nothing to juſtify the Life he leads, except where he's pleading with Lady *Brute* to debauch

bauch her; and ſure no body will ſuppoſe him there to be ſpeaking much of his Mind. Beſides, his Miſtreſs in all her Anſwers makes the Audience obſerve the Fallacy of his Arguments. And I think Young Ladies may without much Penetration make this uſe of the Dialogue, That they are not to take all for Goſpel, Men tell 'em upon ſuch occaſions.

The *Provok'd Wife* is charg'd with nothing more, except *Bellinda* for declaring ſhe'd be glad of a Gallant, and Lady *Brute* for ſaying, *Virtue's an Aſs, and a Gallant's worth forty on't.*

I need make no other Defence for the Ladies, than I have already done for the Gentlemen, the Caſe being much the ſame. However, to ſhew how unfair an Adverſary I have to deal with, I muſt acquaint the Reader, That *Bellin-*

da only ſays, *If her Pride ſhou'd make her marry a Man ſhe hated, her Virtue wou'd be in danger from the Man ſhe lov'd.* Now her Reflection upon this, I take to be a uſeful Caution both to Mothers and Daughters (who think Chaſtity a Virtue) to conſider ſomething in their Matches, beſides a Page and a Coronet.

Lady *Brute*'s Words are fairly recited, but wrongly apply'd: Mr. *Collier*'s miſtaken; 'tis not Virtue ſhe expoſes, but her ſelf, when ſhe ſays 'em: Nor is it me he expoſes, but himſelf, when he quotes 'em.

He gives me no farther occaſion to mention the *Provok'd Wife*, I'll therefore take this to make an Obſervation or two upon the Moral of it, it being upon that account he has call'd it in queſtion,

and

and endeavour'd to make it paſs for a Play that has none.

This Play was writ many years ago, and when I was very young; if therefore there had been ſome ſmall Flaws in the Moral, I might have been excus'd for the Writing, tho' liable to ſome Blame for the Publiſhing it. But I hope it is not ſo looſe, but I may be pardon'd for Both, whether Mr. *Collier* ſets his Seal to't or not.

As for Sir *John Brute*, I think there are an Infinity of Husbands who have a very great ſhare of his Vices: And I think his Buſineſs throughout the Play, is a viſible Burleſque upon his Character. 'Tis this Gentleman that gives the Spring to the reſt of the Adventures: And tho' I own there is no mighty Plot in the whole matter, yet what there is, tends to the Reformation of Manners.

For beſides the hateful Idea his Figure needs muſt give of his Character, the ill Conſequence of his Brutality appears in the Miſcarriage of his Wife: For tho' his ill uſage of her does not juſtify her Intrigue, her intriguing upon his ill uſage, may be a Caution for ſome. I don't find our Women in *England* have much of the *Muſcovite* Temper in 'em: If you'll make 'em think you are their Friend, you muſt give 'em ſofter ſtrokes of your Kindneſs; if you don't, the Gallant has a dangerous Plea, and ſuch a one as, I doubt, has carri'd many a Cauſe. Religion, I own, (when a Woman has it) is a very great Bulwark for her Husband's Security: And ſo is Modeſty, and ſo is Fear, and ſo is Pride; and yet all are little enough, if the Gallant has a Friend in the Gariſon. I there-

fore

fore think That Play has a very good End, which puts the Governor in mind, let his Soldiers be ever ſo good, 'tis poſſible he may provoke 'em to a Mutiny.

The reſt of the Characters, as they have no very great good, ſo they have very little miſchief in 'em. Lady *Fanciful* is ridicul'd for her Vanity and her Affectation. *Mademoiſelle* brings to mind what may often be expected from a *Suivante* of her Countrey. *Heartfree* is catch'd for his extravagant Railing at Womankind: And *Conſtant* gives himſelf a great deal of trouble, for a thing that is not worth his Pains. In ſhort, they are moſt of 'em buſy about what they ſhou'd not be; and thoſe who obſerve they are ſo, may take warning to employ their time better.

I have nothing more to anſwer for in this Chapter, but making the Women ſpeak againſt their own Sex: And having the Preſumption to bring a Fop upon the Stage with the Title of a Lord.

This is a bungling Piece of Policy, to make the Women and the Nobility take up Arms in his Quarrel. I'm aſham'd a Churchman ſhou'd ſpin his Miſchief no finer: The Sollicitors to the Holy War had almoſt as good a Plea. But he had one Conſideration farther in this: He remember'd he had poſitively declar'd, Let a Clergyman be guilty of what Crimes he wou'd, he was God's Ambaſſador, and therefore a Privileg'd Perſon, whom the Poets ought never to take into Cuſtody. This, upon ſecond thoughts, he found wou'd hardly go down, if he monopoliz'd the Privilege to them alone; and

and ſo leſt the Company ſhou'd bring their Charter to a Diſpute, he has open'd the Books for New Subſcriptions; the Lords and the Ladies are invited to come in; the Gentlemen, I ſuppoſe, may do ſo too, if they pleaſe; and, in ſhort, rather than the Committee of Religion ſhall be expos'd for their Faults, all Mankind ſhall be admitted to Trade in Sin as they pleaſe.

But I dare anſwer for the Laity, of what Quality ſoever they may be, they are willing their Vices ſhou'd be ſcourg'd upon the Stage; at leaſt, I never yet heard one of 'em declare the contrary. If the Clergy inſiſt upon being exempted by themſelves, I believe they may obtain it: But I'm apt to fancy, if they protect their Looſe Livers from being expos'd in the Play-houſe, they'll find 'em

grow

grow the bolder to expoſe themſelves in the Streets. A Clergyman is not in any Countrey exempted from the Gallows: And Mr. *Collier* has ſeen one of his Brethren peep through a worſe Place than a Garret-Window: Nay, (in a Reign he reckons a Juſt One) amble through the Town at the Tayl of a Cart, with his Sins in Red Letters upon his Shoulders. A Hangman then may jerk him; Why not a Poet? Perhaps 'tis fear'd he might give him more Senſible Strokes.

I am now come to thank the Gentleman for the laſt of his Favours; in which he is ſo generous to beſtow a Chapter entire upon me.

I'm extremely oblig'd to him for it, ſince 'tis more than ever he promis'd me; For in the Title of his Book, he deſigns to Correct the

the Stage only for the Immorality and Prophaneneſs of it. And indeed I think that was all his buſineſs with't. But he has ſince conſider'd better of the matter, and rather than *quit his hold*, falls a Criticizing upon Plots, Characters, Words, Dialogue, *&c.* even to telling us, when our fine Gentlemen make Love in the prevailing Strein, and when not. This gives us a farther view of his Studies; but, I think, if he kept to his Text, he had given us a better View of a Clergyman.

It may, perhaps, be expected I ſhou'd ſay more in anſwer to this Chapter, than to all that has gone before it; the Senſe of the Play being attack'd here, much more than the Moral, which thoſe who will take Mr. *Collier*'s word for my Principles, muſt believe I am leaſt concern'd for. But I ſhall

ſatisfy

ſatisfy 'em of the contrary, by leaving the Senſe to anſwer for it ſelf if it can: I'll only ſay this for't in general; That it looks as if a Play were not overloaded with Blunders, when ſo Pains-taking a Corrector is reduc'd to the wretched neceſſity of ſpending his Satyr upon *Fire* and *Flames*, being in the ſame Line; and *Arms* twice in the ſame Speech, though at ſix lines diſtance one from t'other. This looks as if the Critick were rather duller than the Poet: But when men fight in a Paſſion, 'tis uſual to make inſignificant Thruſts; moſt of his are ſo wide, they need no parrying; and thoſe that hit, are ſo weak, they make no Wound.

I don't pretend however to have obſerv'd the nicety of Rule in this Play; I writ it in as much haſte (though not in ſo much fu-

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ry) as he has done his Remarks upon't; 'Tis therefore poſſible I may have made as many fooliſh Miſtakes.

I cou'd however ſay a great deal againſt the too exact obſervance of what's call'd the Rules of the Stage, and the crowding a Comedy with a great deal of Intricate Plot. I believe I cou'd ſhew, that the chief entertainment, as well as the Moral, lies much more in the Characters and the Dialogue, than in the Buſineſs and the Event. And I can aſſure Mr. *Collier*, if I wou'd have weakned the Diverſion, I cou'd have avoided all his Objections, and have been at the expence of much leſs pains than I have: And this is all the Anſwer I ſhall make to 'em, except what tumbles in my way, as I'm obſerving the foul play he ſhews me, in letting the

the *Relapſe* in ſo wrong a Light as he does, at his opening of the Fable on't.

In the firſt Page of his Remarks upon this Play, he ſays I have given it a wrong Title; The *Relapſe*, or *Vertue in Danger*, relating only to *Loveleſs* and *Amanda*, who are Characters of an Inferior Conſideration; and that the *Younger Brother*, or the *Fortunate Cheat* had been much more proper; becauſe *Young Faſhion* is, without competition, the principal Perſon in the Comedy.

In reading this Gentleman's Book, I have been often at loſs to know when he's playing the Knave, and when he's playing the Fool; nor can I decide which he's at now. But this I'm ſure, *Young Faſhion* is no more the Principal Perſon of the Play, than He's the beſt Character in the

the Church; nor has he any reaſon to ſuppoſe him ſo, but becauſe he brings up the Rear of the moſt inſignificant part of the Play, and happens to be the Bridegroom in the cloſe on't.

I won't ſay any thing here irreverently of Matrimony, becauſe *à la Françoiſe* Bigottry runs high, and by all I ſee, we are in a fair way to make a Sacrament on't again. But this I may ſay, That I had full as much reſpect for *Young Faſhion*, while he was a Batchellor, and yet I think while he was ſo, *Loveleſs* had a part, that from People who deſire to be the better for Plays, might draw a little more Attention. In ſhort; My Lord *Fopington*, and the *Bridegroom*, and the *Bride*, and the *Juſtice*, and the *Matchmaker*, and the *Nurſe*, and the *Parſon* at the rear of 'em, are the Inferior Perſons of the Play (I mean

mean as to their buſineſs) and what they do, is more to divert the Audience, by ſomething particular and whimſical in their Humours, than to inſtruct 'em in any thing that may be drawn from their Morals; though ſeveral uſeful things may in paſſing be pickt up from 'em too.

This is as diſtinct from the main intention of the Play, as the buſineſs of *Gomez* is in the *Spaniſh Fryar*. I ſhan't here enter into the Conteſt, whether it be right to have two diſtinct Deſigns in one Play; I'll only ſay, I think when there are ſo, if they are both entertaining, then 'tis right; if they are not, 'tis wrong. But the Diſpute here is, Where lies the principal buſineſs in the *Relapſe*? Mr. *Collier* decides it roundly for the Wedding-houſe, becauſe there's beſt Chear; his Patron, Sir *Tunbelly*, has got a good Veniſon-

Veniſon-Paſty for him, and ſuch a Tankard of Ale, as has made him quite forget the Moral Reflections he ſhou'd have made upon the Diſorders that are ſlipt into *Loveleſs*'s Houſe, by his being too poſitive in his own ſtrength, and forgetting, that *Lead us not into Temptation*, is a Petition in our Prayers, which was thought fit to be tackt to that for our daily Bread.

And here my Deſign was ſuch, I little thought it wou'd ever have been Ridicul'd by a Clergyman. 'Twas in few words this.

I obſerv'd in a Play, call'd *Love's laſt Shift, or the Fool in Faſhion*, a Debauche pay ſo dear for his Lewdneſs, and his Folly, as from a plentiful Fortune, and a Creditable Eſtabliſhment in the World, to be reduc'd by his Extravagance to want even the Common Supports of Life.

In this Diſtreſs, Providence (I ask Mr. *Collier*'s pardon for uſing the word) by an unexpected turn in his favour, reſtores him to Peace and Plenty: And there is that in the manner of doing it, and the Inſtrument that brings it to paſs, as muſt neceſſarily give him the moſt ſenſible View, both of his Miſery paſt, from the Looſeneſs of his Life; and his Happineſs to come, in the Reform of it. In the cloſe of the Play, he's left throughly convinc'd it muſt therefore be done, and as fully determin'd to do it.

For my part, I thought him ſo undiſputably in the right; and he appear'd to me to be got into ſo agreeable a Tract of Life, that I often took a pleaſure to indulge a muſing Fancy, and ſuppoſe my ſelf in his place. The Happineſs I ſaw him poſſeſt of, I lookt upon as a Jewel

a Jewel of a very great worth, which naturally lead me to the fear of loſing it; I therefore conſider'd by what Enemies 'twas moſt likely to be attack'd, and that directed me in the Plan of the Works that were moſt probable to defend it. I ſaw but one danger in Solitude and Retirement, and I ſaw a thouſand in the buſtle of the World; I therefore in a moment determin'd for the Countrey, and ſuppos'd *Lovelace* and *Amanda* gone out of Town.

I found theſe Reflections of ſome ſervice to my ſelf, and ſo (being drawn into the folly of writing a Play) I reſolv'd the Town ſhou'd ſhare 'em with me. But it ſeems they are ſo little to Mr. *Collier*'s Taſte, he'll neither eat the Meat himſelf, nor ſay Grace to't for any body elſe. I'll try however if

the following Account will recommend it to him.

Loveleſs and his Wife appear in the ſtart of the Play, happy in their Retirement, and in all Human Proſpect, likely to continue ſo, if they continue where they are. As for *Amanda*, ſhe's ſo pleas'd with her Solitude, ſhe deſires never to leave it; and the Adventures that happen upon her being forc'd to it, may caution a Husband (if he pleaſes) againſt being ſo very importunate to bring his Wife (how vertuous ſoever) into the way of Miſchief, when ſhe her ſelf is content to keep out of it.

Loveleſs, He's ſo thoroughly wean'd from the taſte of his Debauches, he has not a thought toward the Stage where they us'd to be acted. 'Tis Buſineſs, not Pleaſure, brings him thither again, and his Wife can't perſuade him there's

there's the leaſt danger of a Relapſe; He's proud to think on what a Rock his Reformation is built, and reſolves She her ſelf ſhall be a Witneſs, That though the Winds blow, and the Billows roar, yet nothing can prevail againſt it.

To Town in ſhort they come, and Temptation's ſet at defiance. *Lead us not into it*, is a Requeſt he has no farther occaſion for. The firſt place he tries his Strength, is where he us'd to be the moſt ſenſible of his Weakneſs.

He cou'd reſiſt no Woman heretofore; He'll now ſhew he can ſtand a Battalion of 'em; ſo to the Play-houſe he goes, and with a ſmile of contempt looks cooly into the Boxes. But *Berinthia* is there to chaſtiſe his Preſumption: He diſcovers her Beau-

ty, but deſpiſes her Charms; and is fond of himſelf, that ſo unmov'd he can conſider 'em. He finds a Pleaſure indeed, in viewing the Curioſity, but 'tis only to contemplate the Skill of the Contriver. As for Deſire, he's ſatisfy'd he has none; let the Symptoms be what they will, he's free from the Diſeaſe; he may gaze upon the Lady till he grows a Statue in the Place, but he's ſure he's in love with none but his Wife. Home he comes, and gives her an account of what he had ſeen; ſhe's alarm'd at the Story, and looks back to her Retirement: He blames her Suſpicion, and all's ſilent again. When Fate (here's Blaſphemy again) ſo diſpoſes things, that the Temptation's brought home to his Door, and his Wife has the misfortune to invite it into her Houſe. In ſhort;

Berinthia

Berinthia becomes one of the Family: She's Beautiful in her Perſon, Gay in her Temper, Coquet in her Behaviour, and Warm in her Deſires. In a word, The Battery is ſo near, there's no ſtanding the Shot, Conſtancy's beaten down; the Breach is made, Reſolution gives ground, and the Town's taken.

This I deſign'd for a natural Inſtance of the Frailty of Mankind, even in his moſt fixt Determinations; and for a mark upon the defect of the moſt ſteady Reſolve, without that neceſſary Guard, of keeping out of Temptation. But I had ſtill a farther end in *Loveleſs's Relapſe*, and indeed much the ſame with that in the *Provok'd Wife*, though in different kind of Characters; theſe latter being a little more refin'd,

which places the Moral in a more reasonable, and I think a more agreeable View. There; The Provocation is from a *Brute*, and by consequence cannot be supposed to sting a Woman so much, as if it had come from a more Reasonable Creature; the Lady therefore that gives her self a Loose upon it, cou'd not naturally be represented the best of her Sex. Virtuous (upon some ground or other) there was a Necessity of making her; but it appears by a Strain of Levity that runs through her Discourse, she ow'd it more to Form, or Apprehension, or at best to some few Notions of Gratitude to her Husband, for taking her with an Inferior Fortune, than to any Principle of Religion, or an extraordinary Modesty. 'Twas therefore not extremely to be wondred at, that when her Husband

made

made her Houſe uneaſy to her at home, ſhe ſhou'd be prevail'd with to accept of ſome Diverſions abroad. However, ſince ſhe was Regular while he was kind, the Fable may be a uſeful Admonition to Men who have Wives, and wou'd keep 'em to themſelves, not to build their Security ſo entirely upon their Ladies Principles, as to venture to pull from under her all the Political Props of her Virtue.

But in the Adventures of *Loveleſs* and *Amanda*, the Caution is carri'd farther. Here's a Woman whoſe Virtue is rais'd upon the utmoſt Strength of Foundation: Religion, Modeſty, and Love, defend it. It looks ſo Sacred, one wou'd think no Mortal durſt approach it; and ſeems ſo fix'd, one wou'd believe no Engine cou'd ſhake it: Yet looſen one Stone,

the

the Weather works in, and the Structure molders apace to decay. She discovers her Husband's return to his Inconstancy. The unsteadiness of his Love gives her a Contempt of his Person; and what lessens her Opinion, declines her Inclination. As her Passion for him is abated, that against him's inflam'd; and as her Anger increases, her Reason's confus'd: Her Judgment in disorder, her Religion's unhing'd; and that Fence being broken, she lies widely expos'd: *Worthy*'s too sensible of the Advantage, to let slip the Occasion: He has Intelligence of the Vacancy, and puts in for the Place.

Poor *Amanda*'s persuaded he's only to be her Friend, and that all he asks, is to be admitted as a Comforter in her Afflictions. But when People are sick, they are so fond of a Cordial, that when they get it to

their

their Noſe, they are apt to take too much on't.

She finds in his Company ſuch a Relief to her Pain, ſhe deſires the Phyſician may be always in her ſight. She grows pleas'd with his Perſon as well as his Advice, yet ſhe's ſure he can never put her Virtue in Danger. But ſhe might have remembred her Husband was once of the ſame Opinion; and have taken warning from him, as the Audience, I intended, ſhou'd do from 'em both.

This was the Deſign of the Play; which I think is ſomething of ſo much greater Importance than *Young Faſhion*'s marrying Miſs *Hoyden*, that if I had call'd it the *Younger Brother*, or the *Fortunate Cheat*, inſtead of *the Relapſe*, or *Virtue in danger*, I had been juſt as much in the wrong, as Mr. *Collier* is now.

His

His reaſon, I remember, why *Loveleſs* can't be reckon'd a Principal Part, is, Becauſe he ſinks in the Fourth Act. But I can tell him, If the Play had ſunk in the Fourth Act too, it had been better than 'tis, by juſt Twenty *per Cent.* However, tho' *Loveleſs*'s Affair is brought about in the Fourth Act, *Amanda*'s laſt Adventure is towards the End of the Fifth. But this is only a Cavil from the Formality of the Criticks; which is always well broken into, if the Diverſion's increas'd by't, and Nature not turn'd Top-ſide-turvy. If therefore nothing but the Criticks (I mean ſuch as Mr. *Collier*) find themſelves ſhock'd by the Diſorders of this Play, I think I need trouble my ſelf as little to juſtify what's paſt, as I own I ſhou'd to mend it, in any thing to come; had I thoughts of medling any more

more with the Stage. But to draw to an End.

I have reſerv'd for the Cloſe of this Paper, one Obſervation (a home one I think) upon the Unfair Dealing of this Reverend Gentleman; which ſhews at once the Rancor of his Venom, the Stretch of his Injuſtice, and by a Moral Conſequence, I think, the Extremity of his Folly: For ſure there cannot be a greater, than for a Man of his Coat, at the very Inſtant he's declaiming againſt the Crimes of the Age, to lay himſelf ſo open, to be hit in the moſt Immoral Blot of Life, which that of Slander undiſputably is.

To Explain. I beg the Reader will beſtow one Moments Reflection upon the Pains he has taken to make *Young Faſhion* and his Affair paſs for the Principal Concern of the Comedy; which he only has done,

done, in hopes to ſink the uſeful Moral of the Play, which he knew lay in t'other part of it, and wou'd unavoidably have appear'd in Judgment againſt his Reflections upon the whole, if he had not taken this way to ſtifle the Evidence: He therefore carries on the Impoſture to that degree, as at laſt to ſlubber over the Concluſive Scene between *Worthy* and *Amanda*, as if there were no Meaning of Importance in it. Nay, his Rage is ſo great (to find the Stamp of Immorality he wou'd fain have fix'd upon this Play, ſo cleanly waſh'd off by the Cloſe of this Scene) that he cares not what Folly he commits: And therefore in his Heats, rather than commend it for the Alarm it gives to Lewdneſs, by *Worthy*'s Reflections upon *Amanda*'s Refuſal, he turns him into Ridicule for an

Inſipid

Inſipid *Platonick*: By which we may gueſs, had he been in the Fine Gentleman's Place, the Lady wou'd not have 'ſcap'd as ſhe did. I'll repeat *Worthy*'s Words, with the Doctor's uſe of 'em, and ſo have done.

Sure there's Divinity about her, and ſh'as diſpenc'd ſome Portion on't to me: For what but now was the Wild Flame of Love, or (to diſſect that ſpecious Term) the vile, the groſs Deſires of Fleſh and Blood, is in a Moment turn'd to Adoration: The courſer Appetite of Nature's gone, and 'tis methinks the Food of Angels I require. How long this Influence may laſt, Heaven knows: But in this Moment of my Purity, I cou'd on her Own Terms accept her Heart. Yes, Lovely Woman, I can accept it, for now 'tis doubly worth my Care: Your Charms are much increas'd ſince thus adorn'd: When Truth's ex- Relapſe, p. 100.

torted

torted from us, then we own the Robe of Virtue is a Graceful Habit.

Cou'd Women but our ſecret Councils ſcan;
Cou'd they but reach the deep Reſerves of Man;
They'd wear it on, that that of Love might laſt:
For when they throw off one, we ſoon the other caſt.
Their Sympathy is ſuch-----
The Fate of one, the other ſcarce can fly,
They live together, and together dye.

This Reflection *Worthy* makes to himſelf, upon *Amanda*'s having Virtue enough to reſiſt him, when he plainly ſaw ſhe lay under a preſſing Temptation.

Now when 'tis conſider'd, That upon the Stage the Perſon who ſpeaks in a Soliloquy is always ſuppos'd

ſuppos'd to deliver his real Thoughts to the Audience: I think it muſt be granted, there never was a homer Check given to the Lewdneſs of Women in any Play whatſoever. For what in Nature can touch 'em nearer, than to ſee a man, after all the Pains he has taken, and the Eager Arguments he has us'd, lay open his Heart, and frankly confeſs, had he gain'd his Miſtreſs, ſhe had loſt her Gallant.

This I thought was a Turn ſo little ſuited to Comedy, that I confeſs I was afraid the Rigor of the Moral wou'd have damn'd the Play. But it ſeems every body cou'd reliſh it but a Clergyman. Mr. *Collier*'s Words are theſe:

Amanda *continues obſtinate, and is not in the uſual Humour of the Stage: Upon this, like a well-bred Lover he ſeizes her by force, and* P. 227.

threatens to kill her : (By the way, this Purblind Divine might have ſeen 'twas himſelf, not his Miſtreſs, he threatned.) *In this Rencounter the Lady proves too nimble, and ſlips through his Fingers. Upon this Diſappointment he cries*, There's Divinity about her, and ſhe has diſpens'd ſome Portion on't to me. *His Paſſion is metamorphos'd in the turn of a hand: He's refin'd into a* Platonick *Admirer, and goes off as like a Town-Spark as you wou'd wiſh. And ſo much for the Poet's Fine Gentleman.*

The World may ſee by this, what a Contempt the Doctor has for a Spark that can make no better uſe of his Miſtreſs, than to admire her for her Virtue. This methinks is ſomething ſo very extraordinary in a Clergyman, that I almoſt fancy when He and I are faſt aſleep in our Graves, thoſe who

ſhall

ſhall read what we both have produc'd, will be apt to conclude there's a Miſtake in the Tradition about the Authors; and that 'twas the Reforming Divine writ the Play, and the Scandalous Poet the Remarks upon't.

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